

TOW a long time after

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Summary: This is an C & M fanfic. This takes place 5 years after season 3 ends. Guess who meets again?

TOW a long time after

The One With A Long Time After

>Part 1

>
NOTE: This is an C&M fic. Ok this is what I'm thinking. In the beginning of season four the show ends. It ends right after "TO after the beach". Chandler got a job transferr to Staten Island and decided to move there. Then he met someone and... you'll see. Joey lives in their old apartment and got a new roommate, Lewis, who got together with Monica. And Monica works as a chef at a resturant. Joey himself has been going steady for a couple of months with this girl called Mandy. Ross and Rachel never broke up the second time, instead he proposed to her and she said... well you'll see. Phoebe has a boyfriend and she still works as a massuse. It's been about five years since Chandler left. Warining: If you're looking for jokes you shouldn't read this, it's pretty sappy.

>
Chapter 1:

>A Whole New Life

>The first rays of light fell on Chandler Bing's face forcing him to get up. Looking out the window he saw what would've been a perfect day. It would've been if it wasn't for the fact that it was his life and that no days were ever perfect. Walking into the bathroom he almost tripped over the vacuumcleaner. How long had it been there? He had no idea, could be two weeks, could be two months, he didn't really care. Looking at his face in the mirror made him realize that he, this weekend too, had done absolutely nothing. He had a two day shadow on his chin and cheeks and his hair, which hadn't been washed for over a week, looked very tangled. He sighed and decided for the fastest option, a shower.
After the shower he went into the kitchen to get something to eat, as he was looking for the cerials, something caught his attention. It was a picture of the old gang. On the picture they were at Central Perk, everybody was smiling and having fun.

>"Those were the days" he said to himself.
Now he was all alone. He would never forget the night he had moved out of his and Joey's apartment.

>Joey had cried, he had cried, so had everyone else for that matter.
"You'll still come and visit, right?" Joey had said pulling Chandler into one last hug.

>"Sure" he had replied and picked up the braclet Joey had given him a few years ago. "We're 'Best buds forever', remember?"
Sadly that would be the last thing he said to Joey, or anyone else of his old friends. After that he had been so caught up at work that it was too late to call them or he had been away on business trips. And then of course came Julia, the woman in his life. After one look at her he knew that they were meant to be, apparently so did she and only three months after they met they got married. His friends didn't attend the wedding. He hadn't had the courage to call them since it had been over a year since he left.

>"Come on Chandler, there your friends, I'm sure they'd love to be here" Julia had said a couple of days before the wedding but he had protested.
"It would just be too awkward, besides if I told them I was getting married they would probably not believe me"

>And with that Julia had given up trying to get him to talk to his old friends. The truth was he was too embarrassed to call them, thinking that they were mad at him for not calling or coming over to them for a visit, to be perfectly honest he didn't even know if they were living in their old apartments anymore. As he sat down at the kitchen table it struck him how different this place looked from his old bachelor pad. It was bright and summery with light colours. That had been Julia's idea, she always said that if you were in a beautiful kitchen you got a better appetite. Maybe she was right but lately Chandler hadn't been in the mood to eat anything. Not since that night. The night that would stick to his mind forever, the day Julia told him about her illness. She had leukemia and that the doctors couldn't cure her.
"But they have to!" he had yelled.

"You can't leave me, I love you"

>He had known there was no use in protesting, the look in her eyes had completely given up hope about ever recovering.
"I love you too! This is all my fault!" she had said to him with tears in her eyes "How? How can it be your fault?" he demanded to know.

>At this point she had started to cry out loud
"My mom died in leukemia and my dad never got over it, then I made a promise never to fall in love not wanting to hurt anyone that much if it turned out that I had the disease but then I met you and..."

>Shaking with sobs she sank down on the floor and began to rock back and forth. He had watched her with pain in his eyes, walked over to her and pulled her into a strong hug.
"Shhh, shhh" he had said, trying to calm her down "You have made me the happiest man alive, everyday these past three years I have thanked God that I met you, to even be allowed to have that much happiness in that short of a time is a blessing"

>Her crying had drowned out to quiet sobs, she had leaned her head against his chest and put her hands in his.
"But I don't want to go, I don't wanna leave you"

>"You will never leave me" he had said trying to smile. "I will always have you here, in my heart"
The last months of Julia's life he hadn't left her side. Not wanting to waste one minute of the time he had left with her knowing that she at any second could get dragged away from him and never return. The week before Julia passed away she had been lying in a hospital bed almost not being able to move. It had been both painful and scary to see the love of his life lying there with dozens of tubes and machines surrounding her. The

room made it all so real and it proved what he had been denying for so long. The person he loved most in the whole world was going to be taken away and there was nothing he could do about it. Her appearance had changed as well, she was no more the healthy, joyess woman she once was. She had lost a lot of weight and her face was almost as white as the pillow. The day that he had seen her alive for the last time had stuck to his memory forever.

>"Chandler don't be by yourself" she had said as she took her last breaths, her voice was but a whisper.
"I won't" Chandler had said softly, taking her hand, tears forming in his eyes. "I have my family"

>"That's not what I meant" she had said looking him directly in the eyes. "Don't stop looking for love, don't die alone because you feel obligated to me"
It was with deep trouble she got out those words, partly because in her mind she didn't want him to find someone else, althought deep inside she knew that she wanted him to be happy, that with or without her and partly because most of her body had given up on her, but the warmness and securaty of her hand in his she would remember forever.

>"But I love you!" he had said tears streaming down his face.

"And I love you, and I want you to be happy after... after I'm gone" With those words she had closed her eyes to never again open them.

>The first weeks after that was, for him, a total blur. It was as if he had walked around in a deep fog, not taking notice of anyone or anything. It still pained him walking into their home alone knowing that Julia would never arrive. Since he hadn't called his friends for the wedding he didn't call them for the funeral either. Althought he knew that Julia didn't want him to be alone he hadn't been able to bring himself together to date anyone seriously. He had been on a few dates but that was all they had been, dates. To date he hadn't met someone who could replace Julia and he doubted that he ever would. Looking at the calender he saw what he had feared for so long, this wednseday was Julia's death-date. On the first one he had locked himself in his office trying to get away from everyone. He hated it when some of his co-workers, who he had never spoken to, all of a sudden came up to him and told him how sorry they were. Knowing they only said it to escape a guilty consiounce made him angry. Looking at the clock above the phone made him realize that he didn't have time to suffer, he had to be at work in twenty minutes. Quickly wiping his tears, he put on his jacket and took a last look at the picture of the old gang. He wondered what they were doing now.

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>An alarmclock went off and Monica Geller groaned. She hated mornings. Rolling over, she pressed the snooze button and closed her eyes again. When she finally woke up again the clock told her that she had been asleep for two hours. Sighing she sat up and rubbed her eyes. Her first instinct was to yell at her roommate Rachel Green. She opened her mouth but quickly closed it again as she remembered that Rachel didn't live there anymore. She had gotten married to Monica's brother Ross a few years ago and moved in with him across the street. Instead Monica lived with her first roommate Phoebe Buffay. Knowing Phoebe didn't care about time and said it was inwented by busy, mean people she thought it would be better not to say anything. She got out of bed, put on her slippers and headed for the bathroom. On her way there she noticed Phoebe sitting by the kitchen table with Joey Tribbiani, their next door neighbour, and his girlfriend Mandy.
"Hi there sleepy" Phoebe said as she looked up from the newspaper she was reading.

>Monica just nodded and disappeared into the bathroom. Phoebe looked after her worriedly, she hadn't been the same since the loss of her baby. Phoebe remembered how happy Monica had been when she finally got pregnant by her, then fiancÃ©, Lewis. They had been trying for some time and then it finally happened. Their happiness wasn't long though, Monica had a miscarriage when she was three months gone. Lewis accused her of being irresponsible and careless and their relationship came to an abrupt end.
Monica didn't often show it but Phoebe knew she was hurting. It didn't exactly get better when Ross and Rachel declared that they were getting married and then later declared that Rachel was pregnant. Unwilling to leave Monica in the apartment all alone Phoebe had decided to move back in with her best friend. That also meant that she would have closer to all of her best friends, except of course Chandler. Neither of them really knew what had happened to him. He had just stopped calling and visiting, why she had no idea. Ross and Rachel had tried to reach him for their wedding but his secretary had told them that he was at some important trip for two weeks. After that they had given up. Phoebe looked over at Joey. He had taken it the hardest, Chandler had become somewhat of a brother to him.

>"Do you ever think of Chandler?" she suddenly asked not thinking before opening her mouth.
"Sometimes" Joey replied.

>It was obvious he didn't really wanted to go into the topic of his former best friend.
"Who's Chandler?" Mandy wondered and looked at Phoebe curiously.

>Phoebe was a little surprised at this comment, not knowing that Joey hadn't told her about his old roommate.
"He was Joey's old roommate"

>"What happened to him?"
"I honestly don't know, he just stopped seeing us" Phoebe replied, deeply wishing she knew the answer to that question which she and the others had asked themselves many times now.

>Monica came out of the bathroom in a robe and headed for her room.
"What do you want for breakfast?" Phoebe asked getting up and going over to the refrigerator.

>"Doesn't matter just not anything with eggs!" Monica replied from her room. Phoebe took a sandwich out of the the refrigerator. That had been Monica's idea. Not wanting to stress at morning she prepared some breakfast the day before. As she was removing the foil from the sandwich Ross and Rachel entered. Rachel was pretty big by now, as she was nearly nine months pregnant. Ross treated her as if she was made of glass, Rachel had told Phoebe that is sometimes annoyed her but Phoebe just thought it was cute. Ross pulled out a chair for Rachel and she sat down opposite to Phoebe.
"So what are we talking about?" Ross wondered as he sat down next to Rachel with his arm around her.

>"Some Chandler-guy" Mandy answered.
"Oh" Ross didn't really know what to say.

>They hadn't talked about Chandler for years now. Not since he hadn't bothered to appear at Ross and Rachel's wedding. Even though Ross knew he hadn't been in town at the time he thought that Chandler could've at least sent them his congrats. But nothing. He wasn't really mad at Chandler, more disappointed. He looked over at Rachel but she was lost in thought. Rachel remembered the day that Chandler told them he was moving.
"Why?" she had asked and waiting for the answer with fear.

>"I just think it's time... and I won't have to commute everyday" he had replied, that had been his answer to why he was cutting his best friends out of his life. It had really hurt Rachel when he hadn't bothered to call back about her marrying Ross. Taking that as a sign

that he didn't care about the old gang anymore she tried to forget all about him. When she found out she was pregnant she didn't even bother to try and get in contact with him, he was part of the past now. Monica entered from her room wearing her chef outfit.

"Morning guys" she said, faking cheerfulness. She looked at Rachel with pain in her eyes for a bit. No one other than Phoebe noticed how tortured Monica looked, staring at Rachel's growing belly.

>"So..." Monica said trying to think of something else "What have I missed?" "Nothing!" everyone said except Mandy who just stared a little weird at everyone not knowing why the subject 'Chandler' made everyone so uncomfortable. When she thought about it she remembered Joey mentioning something about him to Monica when he thought Mandy wasn't listening. Not knowing how or why Chandler left she could see that it had really hurt the group that he was gone.
"Well as much as I would like to stay and chat about nothing I've gotta get to work"

>"But your breakfast..." Phoebe yelled after her as she hurried out the door.
"I'm not hungry" Monica shouted from the stairway as she disappeared from the building. Confused Phoebe shut the door after her and walked over to the table. "What was that all about?" wondered Ross as he looked a bit worried.

>Rachel finally snapped up the look that Phoebe gave her.
"It's me isn't it? Me being pregnant reminds her of..." Rachel trailed off as she saw Phoebe nodding.

>Rachel gave Ross a worried look.
"Maybe I shouldn't be here..." she began but Ross interrupted her.

>"It's not your fault, sweetie! You're Monica's best friend, she just needs to find someone"
Rachel nodded in agreement.

>"I know, but who?"

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>Stepping into his office made Chandler feel better. His own house had gotten pretty depressing since he left everything just the way it was before Julia died. As he opened his top deskdrawer he caught a glimt of his left hand and his wedding ring. He had made a promise with himself, the minute he met someone he would actually fall in love with, not just like, that was when he could take off his wedding ring without a guilty consiounse. Because to him, his marriage wasn't over, it would never be over, it would only be replaced.
"Mr Bing there's someone here to see you" his secratery said on the intercom. "Send him in" Chandler replied and sat down behind his desk.

>The door opened and a man came in. It was Marc, one of his few true friends at the office and outside.
"Whatcha up to tonight?" he wondered as he went up to him and sat down in a chair.

>"You know the usual, going home, going to bed, sleeping" Chandler replied dryrly. "Good"
Chandler looked at Marc strangely.

>"I mean it's good that you don't have any plans 'cause I gotta ask you a favor" "What kinda favor?" Chandler asked already pretty sure that he knew the answer.
"Well.. you know this girl I've been seeing, Jamie" Chandler nodded. "She wants to set her work friend up on a date and..."

>"And you told her I'd do it" Chandler finished.
Althought he knew that Marc was just trying to help him, he couldn't help but feeling annoyed.

>"Are you ok with that?" Marc wondered and for safetys sake covered his face with his arms as if he was waiting for an explosion to come.
"Why did you suggest me?" Chandler said and sighed over Marc's unsucessfull atempt to make him laugh.

>"Well she told me a little bit about this woman and she seems really nice but she's having a bit trouble getting over the loss of her

baby"
"She had a misscarrige?" Marc just nodded.
>"Ok, fine I'll do it" Marc smiled and patted Chandler on the back.

"There you go buddy" he said but stopped smiling noticing
Chandler's hand "Are you still wearing your wedding ring?"

>Chandler just looked down.
"Look man you've gotta move on sooner
or later"

>"And I'd prefer if it was later!" Chandler shortly replied and
started to go through a report.
Marc looked at him
sympathetically.

>"I know how much you loved her, infact I don't think I've seen
anyone as much in love as you two were but there comes a time when
you've gotta learn to let go. Chandler she's been dead for... What is
it? Two years?"
Chandler felt his heart ache a little.

>"Two years ago this wednsday" he said with a pained expression on
his face. "Exactly" Marc continiued with a soft tone "Do you really
think that Julia would've wanted you to go around moping all the
time? No! She'd want you to be happy! Think about that."
With
those words he left Chandler's office.

>Chandler sighed, deep down inside he knew that Marc was right but he
still hadn't met anyone who even came close to Julia. When he
thought about what Marc had told him about misscarrige he came to
think about Monica, he wondered if she had fulfilled her dream with
husband and kids.
She probably had, if he knew her as well as he
thought he did.

>With one last look at his weddingring he sighed and went back to his
report.

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>"Could give me that chicken?" Monica wondered as she was slicing a
sallad.
"Here you go" Jamie said. "Oh and by the way I think I
might have found the perfect guy for you!"

>Monica looked at her friend Jamie surprised.
"What?"

>"I know!"
Monica sighed.

>"Did you ever consider that I might not want to go on a blind date?"

Now it was Jamie's time to sigh

>"You're going! You haven't been on a real date since Lewis and that
was over a year ago!"
"But..."

>"No but's!"
Monica knew there wasn't really any point in
protesting, when Jamie made up her mind you had to go along... or
live in hell.

>"So why are you so sure I'll like him?" she wondered as she picked
up the chicken.
"Well based on what Marc said he's got a great
sense of humor and he looks cute"

>"Wow all the qualities I've been looking for" Monica replied
sarcastically.
"But you'll do it, right?" Monica turned around
and saw Jamie looking at her with big puppy dog eyes.

>Monica sighed yet again.
"Fine"

>Jamie smiled and gave her a hug.
"But..." Monica continiued. "If
he turns out to be a complete jerk you owe me big time"

>"Deal!" Jamie said and she got the feeling that there was something
she'd forgotten to tell her friend but quickly shook it off, instead
she turned to Monica with a big grin. "I can almost garantie you that
you'll be pleasently surprised!"

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>When Chandler quit for the day he almost felt good. He didn't really
think this date would do much for him but atleast he didn't have to
be in the house all night. He opened his closet to find something to
wear.
He didn't have many things in there, most of his clothes
were dirty. After Julia died, he didn't really care how he or the
house looked. Going through his suits his eyes caught sight of

something, pulling the piece of clothing out he saw that it was his wedding tuxido.

>He looked at it for a while then shook his head and placed it back where he found it. After a while he decided on the suit he was wearing but with a different tie and a different shirt. He gave his hair one last look and took a deep breath. Now there was no turning back.

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>As soon as Monica got home she started to look for Phoebe. She didn't find her but she did find a note from her saying that she had gone to a movie with her boyfriend Sam, Joey and Mandy, that Ross and Rachel were out shopping and that they would all be home later.

Monica sighed. Phoebe was always on about how she should start dating again and now that she actually had a date she couldn't tell her. Oh well, Monica shrugged. She'd tell her when she got home. Looking at the time Monica found that she only had two hours to get ready. She hurried to her bedroom and started going through her closet looking for something that was not to fancy but not to cheap either.

>Going through her outfits her eyes caught sight of something, pulling the piece of clothing out she saw that it was the maternal nightgown that Lewis had bought her. Looking at it almost made her cry. She had wanted a baby more than anything in the world but she didn't get to keep it very long. She tried to keep up her appearance but everytime she saw Rachel, pregnant, happy and married it hurt her so much. She knew it wasn't Rachel's fault but still.
She slowly shook her head and hung the nightgown back where she had found it. Finally she decided on a long darkblue dress with a golden line around the waste. After much thought she decided to wear her hair down remembering her mothers comments about her ears.

>She smiled a little, that was the same day that Chandler was so upset about the fact that some of his co-workers thought he looked gay. She wondered what had happened to him, he had been her best friend for years then he just moved away and she never heard from him again. But that didn't really matter now. She had a date to get to, with one last look in the mirror she took a deep breath and prayed that the date wouldn't be a total dissastre.

>
Chapter 2:

>A Surprising revolution

>Chandler met Marc outside the resturant, Jamie and her friend were already inside.
"You'll do fine, just be nice" Marc tried to encourage him.

>"Just ask me first before you say that I'll do something like this next time" Chandler said and nervously fiddled with his wedding ring.
"Come on let's do it!" Marc said and dragged Chandler with him through the door.

>As they came in Marc spotted Jamie instantly and went over to give her a kiss. Chandler stayed a bit in the background throughout their hello's. His date had her back turned against him, he took a deep breath and went over to her to introduce himself.
"Hi I'm Chandler" he said finally looking at her and saw into the same blue eyes he had said good bye to five years ago.

>"Monica?" Chandler could hardly get out the words, running away seemed like such a relieving solution but he knew that he couldn't.
"Chandler? Oh my god!" Monica got up and gave her old best friend a strong hug, then she realized something, pulled away from him and slapped him on the arm. "What the hell happened to you?! Five years! Five years and nothing!! Not a word! I mean, god, suddenly you move away and we never hear from you again!! How could you?!"

>The feeling of running away got stronger as he stood there and watched the woman he had known for over ten years yelling at him like crazy.
"I mean in all this time, not one call, not one visit! How hard would it have been for you to pick up the phone, or fax a paper or e-mail us or send a freaking post pigeon, just something!!! But no, you just went away and got a whole new life not caring the least about any of your old friends, I mean you should've seen how much you've hurt Joey, you were like a brother to him and you didn't try to contact him once!! You... you didn't even show up at Ross and Rachel's wedding for crying outloud!!!"

>"Wait a minute, Ross and Rachel got married?"
Chandler couldn't believe it, no one had told him about it.

>"Yes!!! We called but your secratery said that you were away on some trip or something and wouldn't be back for two weeks! Not one word have we heard from you, nothing, you didn't even congratulate them!!!"
"I didn't know!!" Chandler defended himself.

>"How could I have known? We told your secratery to give you the message!" "Well obviously she didn't!!!"
Marc and Jamie looked at eachother.

>"Ok, I'm gonna go on a hunch here... do you two know eachother?" Marc asked sarcastically but with curiousness in his voice.

Chandler turned to Marc.

>"Marc, you've set me up with one of my best friends"
"Former best friends" Monica corrected him.

>"Thank you" he said feeling a bit annoyed, Monica kept complaining about how he hadn't contacted them when they hadn't contacted him either.
Now Chandler got mad too.

>"How about you? You didn't call or came to visit or even wrote me a letter!!" "That would've been a little difficult considering you never told us your phonenumber or your adress!!!"
Chandler got a little taken aback at that comment, had he forgotten to send them his adress? Monica on the other hand kept going on.

>"You should've seen how much you hurt Ross and Rachel by not bothering to come"
"I didn't know!" he said once again.

>"Yeah well... they don't know that!!! And another thing..." she trailed off as she noticed something sparkling on his left hand
"What's that?" she asked and looked like hypnotised at Chandler's hand. Chandler quickly hid his hand in his pocket.

>"What's what?" he said trying to act innocent.
"Give me your hand!" Monica demanded. "Not that one!" she said as he showed her his right hand. "Show me the other!"

>Chandler just stood there not being able to move. Monica went up to him and pulled his hand out of his pocket. Examing the ring closer she saw it for what it was, a wedding ring.
"You're married?! You're married!!?"

>Chandler didn't reply he just stood there looking at his shoes.
"You got married and you didn't bother to inform us?"

>Now Monica was not only furious, she was hurt, then she realized something.
"If you have a wife then what the hell are you doing on a date!?"

>Marc glared at Jamie who suddenly remembered the thing she had forgotten to tell Monica about.
"Are you two divorced? Are you seperated? Are you cheating on her? Is she cheating on you?" Monica completely exploded with questions but Chandler just stood there looking at his shoes, Monica finally snapped.

>"That's it isn't it? She's cheating on you, isn't she? So you're going out for revenge. Well I think I can figure out why, it because you never bother telling people things!!!"
Chandler suddenly looked up and, to her surprise, Monica realized that he had tears in his eyes. Without a word he stormed out of the resturant. Marc put

his head in his hands and let out a loud groan.

>"Sorry!" Jamie said and looked really guilty.
Marc turned to her and looked furious.

>"Sorry? How could you not tell her!?"
"It slipped my mind"

>"It slipped..." Marc looked like he was ready to explode. Monica was completely taken aback with Chandler's reaction when she started to ask questions about his wife that it took her several seconds to recover, now she turned to Marc and Jamie.
"What was it that you forgot to tell me!?" she demanded to know and stared at Jamie.

>"Uuhmm..." Jamie began. "You see..."
Marc signed for her to be quiet, then he turned to Monica.

>"What?" Monica began to get worried as she saw the expression on Marc's face. "Monica, he had a wife..." Marc began, Monica just stood there dumbstruck.
"H.. h.. had?" she managed to get out.

>"Julia, Chandler's wife, well... she... she died two years ago"

Monica felt nauseous and grabbed the corner of the table to prevent herself from falling.

>"How?" she asked, her voice had now shrunk to a whisper.

"Julia was diagnosed with leukemia" Marc said looking miserable.

>Monica felt like someone had just stabbed her in the stomach with an axe. Not being able to say anything she just stood there trying to regain her strength. Then something dawned at her, all the things she had said to Chandler before he left, all those horrible things. She felt like the biggest bitch alive.
"I gotta talk to him" she said, grabbed her jacket and rushed out of the restaurant. After a while she came back again.

>"Ok where does he live?"
Marc couldn't help but chuckle at this comment, but the looks that he got from Monica and Jamie made him stop, he gave her the address and she rushed out after him. Marc and Jamie realized that the whole restaurant was staring at them and they too got up to leave.

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>
Chandler kept walking as fast as he could against the cold, strong wind that desperately tried to hold him back. But the heavy wind was nothing like a heavy heart. Hearing Monica say those things about Julia only made him more aware of how lucky he had been to have had her in his life.

>She had never doubted him for any of his visions, she had never put him down and they had never had any really serious fights. She had been his heart and soul, not the least, she had been him. He knew from the first day he met her that she was his soulmate. You only got a few of those and he had actually managed to find one. But she got taken away from me, he thought bitterly as he looked up the hill to his left. There she was, his wife.
After two years he had still never once been to visit her at the cemetery.

>Her family took care of the grave, he hadn't been able to bring himself to go there. Doing that made it all seem so real again. As he was walking he could get the strong feeling that he was being watched but the streets were empty. Shrugging off the feeling he kept walking.

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>Julia stood a few feet away, looking sympathetically at her former husband.
She knew what she had to do. No matter how much it hurt her, she now knew that there was a girl that possibly could replace her in Chandler's heart.

>With a sad smile on her face she gave Chandler a flying kiss and

watched as the love of her life slowly disappeared from her.

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>Monica was sitting in a cab trying to get her cell phone to work, she had to talk to someone about this. Tears kept running down her face but she harshly pushed them away. Finally she heard a signal and called her place. Phoebe answered.
"Hello, Phoebe and Monica's"

>"Phoebs!" Monica said.
"Monica, where are you?" Phoebe asked, she and the rest of the gang had gotten back about an hour ago and noticed that Monica was gone. Now she gestured to the others that she was talking to her.

>"I'm in Staten Island" Monica replied.
"What!? What are you doing there!?" Phoebe was shocked.

>The others looked at her.
"Where is she?" Ross wondered getting up next to Phoebe.

>"Are the rest of the guys there?" Monica wondered as she heard Ross' voice. "Yeah, do you want me to use speaker phone?" Phoebe wondered sensing that what Monica had to tell consumed them all.
"Yes"

>Phoebe pressed the 'speaker' button and Monica's voice could be heard in the apartment.
"Now what's going on?" Ross demanded to know.

>"I had a date tonight..." Monica began but got interrupted.
"In Staten Island?" Rachel wondered.

>"Would you let me finish?"
"Sorry"

>"Anyway..." Monica continued. "My friend Jamie at work sat me up on a date with her boyfriend's best friend and you know who it was?"

"Richard?" said Joey.

>"NO!! It was Chandler!!!"
Now the whole apartment went quiet.

>"Hello? You guys, are you still there?"
Monica's voice cut through the room. Phoebe was the first to pull herself together.

>"What... what did he say?" she wondered realizing what a stupid question it was. "He said a lot of things, and I yelled a lot of things that I don't really wanna get into right now but I behaved like such a bitch!!"
The others could hear that she was fighting not to cry out loud.

>"Sweetie, what happened?" Rachel wondered and looked worried.

The tone of concern became too much for Monica to handle and she started sobbing.

>"I saw something on his finger and it was... a wedding ring..." she got out. "Chandler's married??!!"
Once again the room became completely quiet.

>"So... how's she like?" Joey finally said.
This on the other hand only made Monica cry even louder.

>"What's wrong?" Phoebe was getting really worried, the last time she had heard Monica this upset was when she had lost her baby.
"I said all these horrible things about her cheating on him since he was going on a blind date, and... and..."

>Monica tried to pull herself together because she knew she didn't make much sense.
"When I said that he just stormed off and then his friend told me that..."

>Monica took a deep breath and tried to get herself to finish the words she dreaded to say. The gang looked extremely worried at this point having a sneaking suspicion about what it was that Monica was going to tell them.
"Julia, his wife... died in leukemia two years ago" Monica finally got out and took another deep breath desperately trying to compose herself.

>Phoebe let out a quiet gasp and dropped the phone on the floor. The dialtone cut through the room and in Monica's ear.
"Hello?" but all she heard was the dialtone.

>It didn't really matter now since the cabdriver informed her that this was her stop. Getting out of the car she realized that it was really chilly and that she didn't have more than a sjal to keep her warm. As she payed the cabdriver she tried to figure out which house Chandler lived in. Suddenly she saw a ray of light coming from the house closest to her, reading the mail box she saw that this was it. Not thinking much about why there was a ray of lighth there she hurried up to his front door.

>*****

>Julia smiled a little when she saw Monica approach the door, trying to bring herself to knock. The ray of light had been her doing, for she, as a ghost, could see that Chandler needed Monica right away and that later could be too late. Watching Monica made her a little jealous, knowing that she, herself never could touch, feel or talk to her husband again. But then she smiled, she knew that she would always hold a special place in his heart.
She had been a big part of his past, Monica on the other hand would play a big role as a part of his future. With one last glance at Monica she decided to help her out a little bit, she let the wind knock some branches against the door so that Monica wouldn't have to.

>

>
As Chandler walked up the drive way he could see someone sitting on his front porch, knowing it was Monica made him wanna run away again, but only this time he had no where else to go. Whilst he stood there watching her something inside of him felt warm, his heart. Suddenly he remembered what a big part of his life Monica had been. He smiled to himself when he thought of the time he had offered to be her boyfriend. Seeing her there made him realize that part of him still was hoping that she had said yes. The feeling scared him, it didn't make him insecure but it made him feel lost. Monica suddenly spotted him, got up, ran towards him and gave him a long hug.

>"I'm so sorry" she said as she felt him returning the hug. "I had no idea, I just..." her voice died out and she just held him closer.
Chandler felt extremely confused, he was feeling something that he hadn't felt in a long time, he felt calm. Monica was the person who could make anyone feel safe, just having her there made him feel better. In some bizarr scary way. Monica didn't know how long they had been standing there hugging, probably for over ten minutes but to her it felt more like ten seconds. Not really knowing what to say when she discovered that he wasn't mad at her made her completely loose touch. It felt so... weird. But being close to him made her feel something she hadn't felt in a long time, she felt needed. The rest of the gang all had their special someone's but Monica hadn't been able to find anyone. Now the person that always knew how to put a smile on her face stood right infront of her. The feeling at first seemed perfect but then she came to think of his former wife, judging from how he had reacted when she had attacked her showed that he had loved her very much. Suddenly feeling embarresed she pulled away.

>Chandler realized that she was shaking.
"Do you wanna go inside?" he said and looked concerned, trying to make out her facial expression. Monica just nodded and they started walking towards his house.

>

>
Phoebe was walking back and forth which made the others really nervous. "Phoebe would you please stop doing that?" Ross wondered and

rubbed his forehead.

>"I can't help it" Phoebe replied and stopped for a while. "He's a widower! I always knew something would happen to him just not that that would happen to him"
"I wonder when he married her" Rachel said, absent-mindedly stroking her belly. Mandy hadn't said anything in a long while but now she opened her mouth.

>"Why don't you check the internet" she suggested.
"Why, do you think he has his own web page?" Joey wondered and looked at her. "No, but I'm sure it was in the paper and maybe it's documented on their website. Or if his office has a homepage it could say something about it there" The others just looked at her blankly.

>"Or you could ask him"
The gang looked at each other.

>"Which web page should we go to?" Ross wondered and turned on the computer.

>*****

>Monica got surprised to see what a homely house Chandler had, every corner had been carefully examined to see what type of style it would require. The house itself looked beautiful but there was a kinda depressing atmosphere in it. "You've got a beautiful place" Monica said looking around.
"Thanks, it was Julia's hobby to decorate" Chandler said and smiled a little sadly at the thought of his wife.

>Monica noticed this and once again felt a little uncomfortable.

"Do you wanna see a picture of her?"

>Monica just nodded and followed him up the stairs. His bedroom was in the same style as the rest of the house, warm and homelike.

Chandler took out a photo album from a bookshelf and started going through it.
"Here" he said and placed the photo album in Monica's lap. "This is my favorite one"

>Monica looked at the cute, smiling woman and it struck her how much she reminded her of someone. Unable to figure out who Monica shook off the feeling and asked if he had their wedding picture somewhere. Chandler searched through a few pages and pointed at a picture.

"Wow, you look so happy" Monica said looking at the couple smiling.

>"We were" Chandler replied.
Monica thought she heard a bit of bitterness in his voice but decided to ignore it.

>"Why didn't you call us?" she said instead and closed the album, she could see that Chandler was staring at Julia's picture. Chandler finally snapped out of it and looked at Monica surprised.
"To be perfectly honest I didn't think you'd come"

>Monica couldn't believe it.
"Why?"

>"I figured you'd be mad at me 'cause I hadn't made contact with you before" he said with a mischievous smile and looked teasingly at her.
Monica could feel that she was blushing.

>"Ok maybe I went on a little strong" she admitted and smiled.
"A little?" he chuckled "You exploded like a volcano in there"

>Monica looked away embarrassed but instead of making further fun of her Chandler got up and sat down next to her.
"So what have you been up to?" he asked and looked at her curiously.

>She looked up at him, a little surprised that he hadn't humiliated her further. "Oh you know, the usual..." she said trailing off when she saw the look Chandler gave her, the look that said 'I know'.

"Jamie told you didn't she?"

>Chandler nodded.
Monica felt tears forming in her eyes but quickly dried them hoping that Chandler wouldn't notice, but unfortunately he knew her far too well.

>"Oh Mon" he said and pulled her into a strong hug. Monica felt that for the first time since the miscarriage she could let all her

sorrow out and started to cry out loud.

>*****

>"Here it is!" Ross yelled triumphly and looked at the computer.

"Really?" Rachel wondered and started to get up with some help from Joey. "How does she look?"

>"Personally I think she looks a bit like Monica" Mandy said.

"You think?" Phoebe replied doubtfully.

>Mandy nodded.
"Maybe a little" Rachel confessed as she looked at the picture.

>"Same hair colour"
"I think she looks more like Shannon Dorethy" Joey said.

>Mandy looked at him jealous.
"So you like her, huh?" Joey quickly tried to cover

>"It doesn't matter, she's dead now"
Suddenly realizing what he said he looked miserable.

>"I wonder how Chandler is doing these days"
No one said anything they just looked at the picture of the smiling couple.

>

>
Monica felt like she had been in Chandler's home only a few minutes but when she looked at the time she saw that she had been there for four hours. But right now, keeping track of the time felt like such a novelty. They had talked and talked about everything. She had told him about her misscarriage and her failed relationship with Lewis and he had told her all about his marriage to Julia and her struggle against the leukemia.

>She had also noticed that there was something different about him. He was no longer the goofy, funny guy. He was more mature and subtle. It was like he had grown-up and started to take life seriously. Another thing that struck her was how open he was about Julia, seeing how affectionate he talked about her made her realize that he had matured because of her. Losing someone you love is the most horrible thing in the world and if you manage to get through it and stop feeling guilty you could handle anything.
Monica knew, she had also lost someone, her baby.

>"It's getting pretty late"
Chandler's voice cut through her thoughts and made her return to reality.

>"I guess" she said wishing that it hadn't been so.
"I could drive you home... or you could stay here"

>What the hell are you doing, Chandler thought to himself as he watched Monica, waiting for an answer, hoping she would stay. These last few hours had been like a dream, finally getting to talk about all the stuff that had been bothering him with Monica who also had lost someone truly important to her.
Their conversation had made him realize that it was so many loose ends in his life and seeing her again made him feel that he, with time, could tie them all together. But there was something different about her, she was more mature and subtle. Knowing how much she had longed for a baby made his heart ache a little as she told him about what had happened.

>"Sure I could stay" she said smiling shyly.
What the hell did you do that for, she heard a voice inside her say.

>"Ok" Chandler's eyes were filled with relief. "I'll go prepare the spare room"
As he turned around Monica remembered something.

>"Could I just call Phoebe so that she doesn't get worried"

"Sure, the phone's downstairs in the kitchen" Chandler said as he was getting out some sheets.

>Monica went down the stairs to the kitchen, looking at the kitchen table she found the picture of them and the gang.
Looking at it made her smile, so he hadn't forgotten about them after all.

>

>
The gang was sitting in the couch trying to watch TV without really paying attention to what was happening. Suddenly the phone rang and Phoebe hurried up to get it.

>"Hello?"
"Phoebs it's me" Phoebe signed to the others that it was Monica.

>"Monica, where are you, it's getting late"
"I know, I'm spending the night here" Monica said and Phoebe found herself not getting that surprised.

>"So you worked it out?" she wondered, to be honest she had about a million more questions she wanted to ask but that would have to do for now.
"Yeah, we talked about it, and about a hundred more things, look I'll tell you more in the morning, I'm really tired"

>"Bye"
 "Bye" Monica replied as Phoebe hung up the phone she smiled to herself.

>"What did she say?" Rachel wondered and looked at Phoebe.
"She's spending the night" Phoebe answered and her smile grew wider "They worked it out"

>After one look at Joey's dirty smile she quickly added
"Not like that!"

>Joey looked down embarresed.

>
Chapter 3:

>Discovering a secret

>Monica got woken up by the phone that wouldn't stop ringing. She rubbed her eyes for a while.
"Phoebe will you get it?"

>Suddenly she realized where she was, she hurried down the stairs and quickly picked up the phone. It was Phoebe.
"Monica you're supposed to be at work, they just called and asked for you" Monica's eyes still weren't used to the sharp light that gazed through the window.

>"What time is it?" she asked helplessly squinting towards the clock above the phone.
"It's eleven"

>"Eleven!?" Monica sighed but then made a decision.
"Ok I'll just call in sick"

>"Why?"
"I really think Chandler could use a friend right now"

>"Chandler? He has never needed anyone, atleast he hasn't admitted it"
"I'm telling you, he has completely changed"

>"In what way?"
"He's really sensitive and he has matured a lot"

>"Wow, never saw that one coming"
Monica decided to ignore that last comment.

>"So anyway, I'll talk to you later, Phoebs, bye"
As she hung up the phone she realized that the house was very quiet, looking at the refrigerator she found a note. Chandler had already gone to work, but he wanted to see her when he got back. Feeling hungry she opened the refrigerator and started looking through it.

>

>
Marc was nervously walking back and forth in Chandler's office, waiting for Chandler to arrive. He had a million excuses to get out of his system. He couldn't even begin to imagine what Chandler was going through.

>Suddenly he heard foot steps closing in and he tried to get himself together. The man that entered the room made him completely numb. Instead of the miserable, sad face he was prepered for he saw a happy, smiling man.
"Good morning, Marc" Chandler said walking past his colleuge and sitting down behind his desk "What are you

doing here?"

>Marc suddenly remembered what he was there for.
"I just wanted to apologize for what happened last night, I didn't know that Monica was..."

>He had a whole speech prepared but Chandler held up his hands.

"It's ok"

>Marc looked at him.
"Ok who are you and what have you done to my best friend"

>Chandler chuckled but stopped as he saw Marc staring at him.
"I gather it you want an explanation"

>Marc nodded.
"To tell the truth I should thank you"

>Marc couldn't believe his ears.
"What?" he managed to get out.

>"Yep, if it hadn't been for you I never would've gotten a chance to talk to her again"
"What?" Marc repeated unable to say anything else

>"Yeah, we talked for hours, I told her about Julia and she told me what the old gang had been up to, and of course about her misscarrige"
"You talked to her?"

>Marc had just figured that Monica had stopped by to apologize then she'd leave. "Yeah we talked to like eleven o'clock"
"Then she went home?"

>"Actually she spent the night"
"I gotta sit down!"

>Marc sank into the chair opposite Chandler.
"I don't get this, you meet this girl that you haven't talked to in years, she starts yelling all sorts of things right in your face then you end up spending the night together? I don't get you!"

>"We didn't spend the night together, like in bed, she stayed in my guest room" "But still, you haven't as much as looked at another woman since Julia and know you let this Monica woman spend the night at your house?"
"This is different, I've known Monica for over ten years, I even offered to have a baby with her" he smiled to himself when he thought about how freaked out Monica had been when Ben would start to cry as soon as she held him.

>Marc, noticing the smile, stared suspiciously at his best friend. He had known Chandler for about five years and never seen him this... upbeat over someone else than Julia. He started to sense that there was more to this story than what Chandler had told him but he decided not to pressure his friend, he knew that Chandler would tell him when he felt up to it. Instead he looked at him with the feeling he had been searching so long for... hope.

>*****

>After lunch Monica realized that she still was wearing the same clothes she had had on last night. Not really feeling up to going all the way home she decided to see if Chandler had something she could borrow. After looking a while she found some boxes labeled 'Julia's stuff' she opened two of them, one was filled with old videotapes and the other was stuffed with some of her clothes.
She sure had good taste, Monica thought as she searched through it for something to wear. Finally she decided on a pair of stone washed jeans and a green sweater. After she got dressed she started looking through the box of videotapes. They were home movies. She knew she shouldn't but she couldn't help feeling curious, she took one of them out and headed downstairs to the living room. She put the tape in the VCR and turned on the TV.

>It was a shot of the house when Chandler and Julia first had bought it. She could hear that the person shooting was also the person talking.
"And this is our new home, it doesn't look much now but I'll fix this place up!" Monica realized that it must be Julia shooting and became intruded.

>"Ok now we are walking up the stairs to our bedroom" Julia continued and opened the door to the bedroom.
Chandler was there painting not noticing her.

>"And there's my loving husband hard at work"
This made Chandler almost loose balance.

>"Don't do that!" he said as he steadied himself.
"Say something to the camera!" Julia demended and zoomed in on his face.

>"Ok" he said with a mischevious smile "Hi I'm Chandler and I'm the person who's gonna splash paint all over the room if my loving wife doesn't get that thing out of my face"
Monica could hear Julia sigh.

>"You're no fun!" Julia complained and zoomed out.
Chandler climbed down the latter and took the camera from her.

>"Chandler what are you doing!? Give me the camera!" she sounded serious but her face was smiling.
"No, no, you tortured me with this thing now it's my turn" Chandler said "Ok, say something to the camera!"

>Julia laughed.
"Stop it I look horrible!"

>If that's horrible I would hate to see her at her best, Monica thought as she looked at Julia.
"Now give me the camera!" she demanded but Chandler just laughed

>"On one condition, give me a kiss!"
Julia sighed but smiled, went over to him and gave him a long kiss.

>"There?"
Monica could see the camera changing hands and now Julia had it again.

>"Ok now we say good bye to my backstabbing husband" she said as Chandler got back up on the latter to finish painting.
Now Julia shot the guest room.

>"Ok this is the guest room, where guests come to spend time" she said but then she went quiet. "Or... we could, with time, use it as a nursery, if things go well, which I think they will"
Suddenly Monica realized that she had tears running down her face, she didn't think it was fare that someone so... so life like had been taken at such an early age. In the mean time Julia's voice continued on the tape but Monica had seen enough, she went up to turn off the VCR but the videotape wouldn't stop. As she looked up she could see another shot of Julia, but in this one she wasn't happy and upbeat like she had been before instead she looked tired and sick. It must've been when she got leukimia, Monica thought and went back to the couch to watch.

>"Uhm... Ok to whoever it is who sees this I just wanna say that..." Julia swallowed hard and she had tears in her eyes. "I know that I'll never get better, ever. So... I couldn't go in peace if I knew that Chandler always would feel obligated to me, so to you who see this, try to make him move on with his life, take care of him" She chuckled a little.
"I make it sound like he's my hamster, just... I guess you could see this as my last wish, I want him to be happy with or without me and from the way things turned out it seems to be without me"

>She now had tears running down her face.
"Good bye, I guess"

>Then the screen went black. Monica just sat there. She couldn't believe what she had just seen. She had never thought that anyone would be so unselfish, she now realized that the sweater she was wearing was wet from her tears and she also realized that Chandler would be home soon. She quickly popped the tape out of the VCR and hurried upstairs to change and put the tape back where she'd found it.

>*****

>Julia looked after her and smiled. Now Monica must've gotten the

message she had been trying to send her all day. She wasn't the best person with telephatical thoughts, she preferred action. She had been to check up on Chandler a few minutes earlier and he had seemed unusually upbeat not at all like he used to be before he had run into Monica again.
She only hoped that they would find eachother soon because she didn't wanna spend her whole afterlife feeling guilty over her widower husband. As long as he didn't get over her she would always be his heart but there was a diffrence between being in his heart and being his heart which she had been throughout their relationship.

>That went both ways, he was her heart and her soul and as long as he was alive so was she, even if it only was as a memory it was something.
It was everything.

>

>
Chandler opened the front door and at first it surprised him to find the radio on but then he remembered that Monica was there.

>"Mon!" he yelled and looked around. "Did you clean?!"
Monica came down the stairs holding a dustbuster.

>"I had to" she said and looked a bit guilty.
"You still can't leave dirt just laying around can you?" he said with a smile then he saw what she was wearing and his smile faded away.

>"I had nothing to wear" she said when she saw him looking at her. "I hope you don't mind, everything you had was dirty"
Chandler shook off the unpleasant feeling and forced himself to smile again. "It's ok, I just... haven't looked at that stuff since..." he trailed off.

>Monica now felt a little ashamed not asking before she put on his former wife's clothes but there was nothing she could do about it now.
"Anyway" she said trying to change the subject "I talked to the other guys earlier and they would really like to see you"

>Chandler looked up surprised.
"They would?"

>"Well, first of all they want to yell at you, but after that who knows?" Monica said and smiled.
"Yeah I should probably apologize to them" Chandler said, now he was the one that felt ashamed.

>"How about tommorrow?"
Chandler felt how his whole body tensed up and his eyes teared.

>Monica noticed how uncomfortable he was.
"What's wrong?" she said putting her hand on his shoulder and felt how tensed he was.

>"Tommorrow's not a good day for me" he said and tried to fight the tears that formed in his eyes.
"Why not?" Monica's tone of voice was worried as if she could sence that something was wrong.

>"It's..." Chandler took a deep breath.
"Yes?" Monica said looking at him.

>"It's exactly two years ago tommorrow that Julia past away" he said trying not to break his voice.
"Oh" Monica had no idea what to say.

>"I'm not sure that I would be so much fun to be around, that's all" he said and tried to give her a small smile but failed.
"It's ok" Monica said and gave him a hug. "Do you want me to go with you?" Chandler looked at her.

>"Go where?"
"To her grave" Chandler once again felt his muscles tighten. He turned around so that he wouldn't have to face her.

>"I haven't been there"
He spoke so quietly that Monica wasn't sure that he had said it.

>"Why not?"
Monica realized how cold and ridiculous that question was but she couldn't take it back now. Chandler turned to her and looked her in the eyes.

>"Going there make it all seem so real again"
Chandler knew he acted like a scared little boy but he couldn't help it. Monica suddenly remembered the tape she had watched, what was it that Julia had said? She wanted him to be happy and push past this. Monica knew getting him to visit her grave would be the first step.

>"So you have never been there?"
"I was there at the funeral, after that..." he sighed "I couldn't bring myself to go there, I know it's stupid"

>"No, Chandler it's not stupid, it's perfectly normal..." Monica assured him as she came to think of something, she acted just the same way around Rachel.
After the loss of her own baby she could barely look at Rachel without feeling like crying. Chandler noticed she had tears in her eyes.

>"Monica what's wrong?" he wondered and looked extremely concerned.
Monica tried to snuffle a laugh but it came out as a sobe, the whole thing was so ironic, it was he who, in some ways, had suffered the most but it was she that was crying.

>"Come on Mon, what is it?"
Chandler's worried voice made her return to reality and she looked at him.

>"It's nothing, I just thought about how alike we are"
"In what way?"

>"Since Julia... past away you haven't visited her grave because it hurts you too much and since I lost my baby only looking at Rachel makes me wanna cry"
With that Monica finally broke down and she felt Chandler's comforting arms around her. He rocked her back and forth untill her sobs dried out.

>"Why is seeing Rachel so hard for you?"
Monica suddenly realized that she hadn't told Chandler about Rachel being pregnant thinking that Rachel would want to do that herself. But seeing Chandler's face gave away that he already knew.

>"She's pregnant, isn't she?"
It was not so much of a question as it was a statement.

>Monica nodded.
"And I'm guessing since she thought I didn't care to come to her wedding I wouldn't care about this either"

>Monica nodded yet again.
Chandler suddenly came to think about something.

>"When did Ross and Rachel get married?"
"Four years ago" Monica said.

>"No I mean when, what month, what date?"
"Oh, I think it was June 14:th. What kinda trip were you away on?"

>Chandler chuckled a little
"It was my honeymoon" Monica couldn't help but giggle.

>"And we always thought you would be the last one to get married"
The thought of that day, the day that Carol and Susan had gotten married, made them both laugh.

>The rest of the night they didn't talk about either Julia's death or Monica's miscarriage. Instead they sat down in the couch for a horror movie maraton. As the movie got scarier and scarier Monica leaned closer to Chandler. Feeling him next to her made her feel secure, not that she was that scared of the movie, but she was scared of life.
Hearing about Julia made her realize that if it could happen to her it could happen to anyone. Chandler wasn't really paying attention to the movie, all he could think about was Monica, the feelings that stirred around inside of him were very confusing. She's your best friend, the voice in his head hammered down. But his heart told him that there was more.

>Suddenly he realized that he was stroking Monica's hair and abruptly

stopped. What was he doing that for? Not knowing the answer to that question made him annoyed. He looked down at Monica who had fallen asleep with her head on his shoulder. Unable to get up Chandler just sat there watching her sleep.
She looked so peacefull. Suddenly Monica sighed and snuggled closer to him. Chandler caught himself smiling looking at her, she was so beautiful. Then he realized what he had just thought and looked panicked.

>What was he doing, he had only just met her again after five years. He wasn't supposed to have these kind of feelings for her. It was wrong, but yet it felt so right. So unbelievably right. Just as he was about to get up he remembered that he couldn't move without waking up Monica so he sat there and, evantually, he too, fell asleep.

>TO BE CONTINIUED...

End
file.